



# Organizing for State Assessments

## Why go this route?

- Because state assessments are aligned with Michigan's standards.
- Because when students do their best on state assessments, we get a better read on what part of the curriculum they understand. Assessment data that reflects students' best can help a school...
  - Show gains in student achievement.
  - Identify trends or gaps in curriculum or instruction.
  - Comply with state and federally required testing requirements.
- Because staff members working hard in your school deserve to know that they're focused on the right things, so that succeeding will lead to concrete and visible results.

## You'll know you've arrived when...

- The entire school community is knowledgeable about state assessments and what is measured.
- All members of the school community understand their roles in administering and taking state assessments.
- Your curriculum is aligned to state standards.
- Your students know what is expected of them and have clear learning targets based on Michigan standards.
- Your school improvement plan includes action plans tailored to the gaps and challenges faced by your particular students.
- The school improvement team uses state assessment data as one way of testing the effectiveness of your action plans.

## Construction Zone

### *It's About TIME*


- Aligning curriculum (Step 2) may be a year-long process if you are doing it yourself, without a district-provided pacing guide. Be patient with yourself; it needs to be done.
- Surveying instruction or assessment practice might take 1-2 weeks; copying and distributing the packets another week, and the reflective conversation in which you pick a shared improvement will take 1-2 meetings.
- Analyzing assessment performance and selecting focus areas, strategies and follow-up tools and methods is often done during a 1-2 day retreat during the summer.
- Planning logistics and communication strategies may take 2-3 hours.

### *Potential COSTS*

- Posters, newsletters and flyers to promote understanding of roles.

## The Process

*A step-by-step guide to  
getting organized for MEAP.*

**NOTE:** Steps marked with a  are accompanied by one or more inserts, included in this packet.

- 1 Be clear about who is responsible** for decision-making about state assessments.

Consider whether you want to set up a team specifically focused on this task. If so, see Packet 8:1 “Developing School Decision-Making Teams.” Other options might be the principal working with each grade-level team to do these steps, or the School Improvement Team undertaking these efforts.

- 2 Ensure that curriculum is aligned** with Michigan standards.

MI-Map Packet 6:1 “Planning Your Move Towards a Standards-based Curriculum” offers ways to ensure this. Your district might also have its own designed pacing guides or other methods.

- 3 Ensure that instruction is aligned** with Michigan’s standards—and with chosen focus areas if you have named them previously.

INSERT A for Step 3 offers a tool that each teacher can fill out. The principal or grade-level leaders can collect and distribute a packet of all profiles to the entire staff, as a basis for conversation about aligning assessment activities and practices. INSERT B for Step 3 is a concise set of suggestions for aligning Language Arts instruction.

- 4 Ensure that classroom assessment practices are aligned** with Michigan’s standards.

Even if you have worked hard to align curriculum and instruction, if your classroom assessment practices don’t reflect this, your students won’t be familiar with the kind of higher-order thinking skills they’ll be asked to display on state assessments. INSERT A for Step 4 offers examples of prompts for key assessment factors. INSERT B for Step 4 organizes higher-order thinking tasks and products around Bloom’s Taxonomy. INSERT C for Step 4 is a classroom profile that could be collected from individual teachers, copied and distributed for discussion. Choose the method your staff prefers, and agree on a way to be accountable to each other for trying these assessments and discussing what is learned.

- 5 Choose (or revise) focus areas** based on strengths and challenges from past assessments.

INSERT A for Step 5 suggests a series of reflective questions to pinpoint where you want to focus.

- 6 Agree on shared strategies** to address focus areas.

INSERT A for Step 6 is a worksheet that draws classroom and grade-level implications from a chosen focus area. INSERT B for Step 4 is a worksheet for recording and assigning responsibilities for tasks associated with the state assessments.

- 7 Collect data** about how the strategies work.

Ask questions about when strategies are actually being used, what is being learned from them, and whether expected results are seen.

- 8 Clarify roles** for everyone in the community.

See INSERTS for Step 8 that suggest parent newsletter and parent night ideas, a student compact, and “tips” sheets for principal, teachers, parents and students, to help students demonstrate the highest level of achievement possible on the state assessments.

- 9 Make sure logistics are clear** and everyone understands them in advance.

See INSERTS for Step 9 that suggest scheduling tips, and a format for communicating the schedule to teachers and parents. Proctors also need to understand the state assessment protocols.

## Getting more mileage from state assessment organization

*How getting organized for state assessments benefits your school in regard to the following initiatives:*

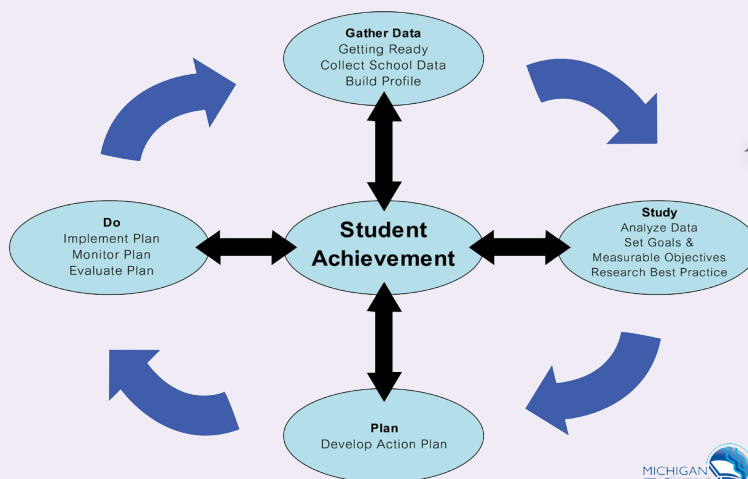
### **Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)**

- ESEA requires that each state apply a single statewide accountability system to all public schools regardless of receipt of Title I funds. Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) is based primarily on Michigan's state assessments.
- Testing is required. You'll be better prepared to address these requirements if you have a solid system for aligning with Michigan's state assessment in place.

### **State Accreditation System**

- A majority of a school's report card grade is determined by performance on the Michigan state assessments.
- Your school's outcome on the Comprehensive Needs Assessment can reflect ideas and strategies developed in this packet's process.

### **Michigan Continuous School Improvement Process (Mi-CSI) Michigan School Improvement Framework**



The School Improvement Framework includes the Comprehensive Needs Assessment that provides an opportunity for schools to examine their state and other assessment data. Gathering and analyzing assessment data helps identify goals and objectives.



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## Resources

### *Books, Articles, Websites*

[http://writingfix.com/classroom\\_tools/nevada\\_writing\\_exam.htm](http://writingfix.com/classroom_tools/nevada_writing_exam.htm)

A wealth of knowledge about teaching and assessment of writing developed collaboratively by the Northern Nevada Writing Project and Nevada's Northwest Regional Professional Development Program.

<http://mathassessments.mscenters.org/>

The Michigan Mathematics Leadership Academy is a partnership between Michigan's regional Mathematics and Science Centers, Michigan Council of Teachers of Mathematics, and Michigan Department of Education. Items that were judged to be aligned and appropriate to the Michigan standards for Mathematics are included in this database. Includes a generator to make customized assessments.

[www.readwritethink.org](http://www.readwritethink.org)  
Search on assessment

An excellent teacher resource from the International Reading Association and the National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE).

### *People*

Intermediate School Districts/RESAs can serve as a resource.

### **For more information, contact:**

Michigan Department of Education

Office of Education  
Improvement and Innovation  
517-241-3147

School Improvement Unit  
517-373-8480

Curriculum and Instruction Unit  
517-241-4285

Office of Assessment  
and Accountability  
517-373-0048

Office of Early Childhood  
and Family Services  
517-241-3592

Office of Field Services  
517-373-3921

Office of Professional Preparation  
and Teacher Certification  
517-373-6505

Office of Special Education  
and Early Intervention Services  
517-373-9433

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